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PROFESSOR LANGDELL — HIS STUDENT LIFE.<sup>1</sup>

PROFESSOR LANGDELL was born at New Boston, N. H., May 22, 1826. His lineage was in part Scotch-Irish, and Scottish traits were prominent throughout his career. He attended for a short time an academy in Hancock, N. H.; worked in a factory at Manchester; and then entered the Phillips Exeter Academy in the spring of 1845 as a candidate for one of the scholarships to be awarded in July of that year. Slow of speech and with a hesitating manner, he was not at first appreciated at his real worth. In the recitation of Latin declensions and conjugations younger students, quick in movement and glib of tongue, impressed the authorities more favorably. When the award of scholarships was made at the close of the term, Langdell was not one of the successful candidates. This was undoubtedly the greatest disappointment of his life, and with many men would have ended all effort to obtain an education. He would have to wait a year before another award of scholarships. His earnings at the Manchester factory, if retained by him, would have carried him through the year, but he had already used part of those earnings in assisting his father. With much misgiving he concluded to remain in the Academy. The authorities gave him some work to do about the building; and by the end of the year the teachers and trustees had come to recognize his ability, and he was awarded a scholarship.

In 1848 Langdell entered the sophomore class at Harvard. Here there was no delay in recognizing his merits. At the end of the year he ranked second in the class. But in those days the college furnished very little in the way of scholarships or other aid, and long before the end of the junior year Langdell left college. The reason was understood to be want of pecuniary support. To-day no student of his promise would be permitted to leave any prominent college for such a reason. Later in life, when Professor Langdell and his colleagues in the law faculty

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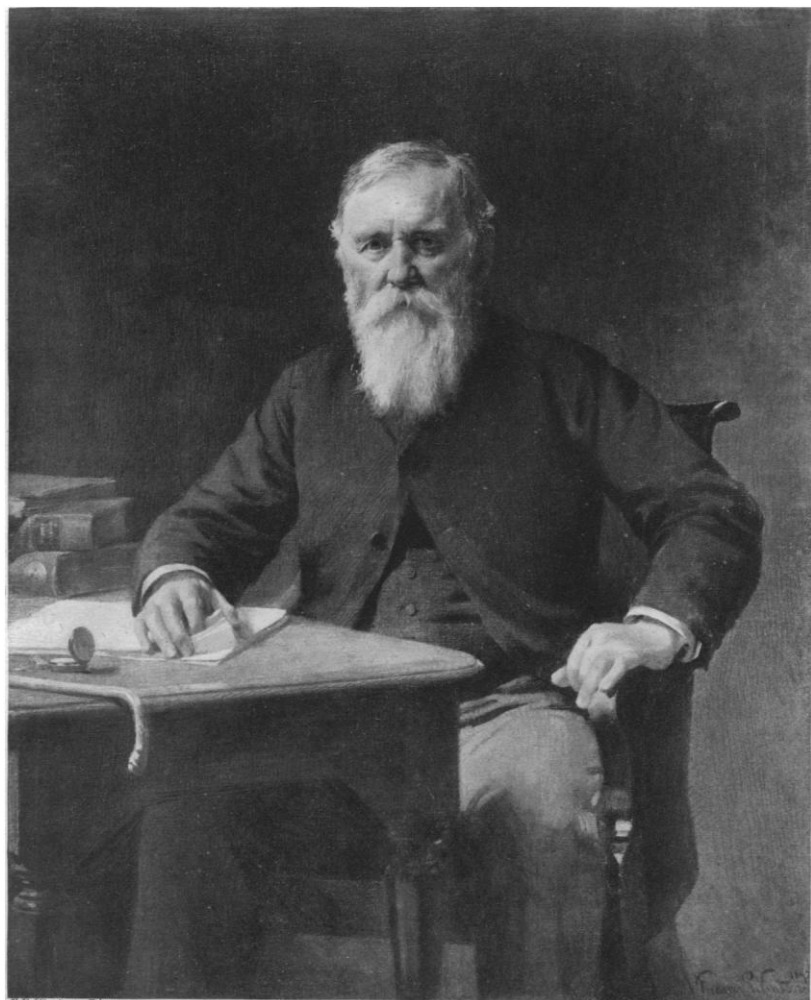
<sup>1</sup> This account of Professor Langdell's early years is part of a sketch of his life printed in the September number of the *Bulletin of Phillips Exeter Academy*. A few alterations have been made.

were awarding scholarships, he said with much feeling that he did not wish any deserving young man to be compelled to leave the school for lack of financial assistance.

Leaving Cambridge, he returned to Exeter, doing in that vicinity whatever would help support him. After some manual labor and a little teaching, he began the study of law in the office of Messrs. Stickney and Tuck. In November, 1851, he entered the Harvard Law School. The faculty soon found him out; and he was made librarian, an office held at that time by students. Professor Parsons, then preparing an edition of his work on contracts, had a keen scent for able young assistants, and employed Langdell as one of his helpers. Without disparaging the distinguished author, it may truly be said that the collection and analysis of authorities, which make the notes of Parsons on Contracts so important a feature of that work, are due largely to his young assistants, and to no one more than to Langdell. Langdell's reputation in the law school may be judged from the fact that in 1854, when his former classmates were receiving the degree of A.M. in regular course, the college conferred upon him the honorary degree of A.M. Later the degree of A.B. was conferred upon him as of the year 1851, and his name now appears with his old class in the quinquennial catalogue. The compliment of election as an honorary member of the *Phi Beta Kappa* society was received by him in 1853, while he was yet a student in the law school.

In 1854 Langdell left Cambridge to engage in the practice of law in New York.

*Jeremiah Smith.*



F. P. Vinton, Peas.

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